

Moran Stands in Opposition to President's Farm Policy Proposal

Opposed to Proposed Changes to Farm Safety Net in President's Budget

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran stated his opposition to proposed changes to farm policy contained in President Obama's budget proposal - released this week - that makes clear the President's intention to phase out direct payments to farmers and substantially change the crop insurance program. Moran's concerns with the administration's position on agriculture policy initially stemmed from the State of the Budget speech where the President proposed reducing direct payments to farmers. Also this week, Moran learned that the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in a meeting with the U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers, commented that, "the future of direct payments is not going to be an easy future."

"Farmers in Kansas have made it clear that the direct payment program is the best safety net available to help them meet the challenges of high diesel and fertilizer costs and costs associated with potential increases in environmental regulation," Moran said. "Direct payments are also the most market oriented by allowing the farmer to plant according to market conditions, and it is the least disruptive of trade. The President's comments are not helpful for our farmers or our economy."

"As rural America faces economic challenges, this is not the time to re-visit debate on the Farm Bill, where commodity programs were significantly cut less than one year ago," Moran continued.

Moran's concern with the President's budget proposal includes a provision that will change the test that determines who can receive direct payments. Under the President's proposal, a farmer could experience a net income loss and be ineligible for direct payments because the President's approach fails to take into account expenses. The change would affect over 4,000 Kansas farms, which is more than 13 percent of farmers in Kansas who have listed their primary occupation as farming.

"The President's budget released this week also calls for changes in the crop insurance program that will negatively impact farmers and might lead to crop insurance companies not offering policies in states with unpredictable weather patterns, like Kansas," Moran continued. "If the administration is successful in implementing its proposal, it will severely hurt the agriculture industry in Kansas and frustrate the very economic recovery the President is promoting. It is clear to me that the President and Sec. Vilsack have taken a position that is out of touch with production agriculture."

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